



UNITED STATES SENATE  
**REPUBLICAN  
POLICY COMMITTEE**

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**Drug Use By 8th Graders Up 56 Percent Since Clinton Took Office**

**Clinton's Failing War On Drugs**

Throughout the Clinton presidency, America has been witnessing increases in illegal drug use among our nation's younger generation. This sharp reversal from the steady progress made against illegal drug use throughout the 1980s and early 1990s is the inescapable result of the Clinton Administration's retreat in the war against drugs. The Clinton Administration has de-emphasized law enforcement and interdiction while relying heavily on drug treatment programs for hard-core drug abusers in the hopes of curbing drug usage. Result: backward momentum.

**Backward Momentum From Day One: Drug Abuse Under Clinton**

Two national annual surveys show that drug abuse by our nation's youth has continued to increase since President Clinton came to office. The most recently released Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education -- the so called "PRIDE" survey -- and the University of Michigan's "Monitoring the Future" both offer cause for alarm.

The Monitoring the Future Study reveals that illicit drug use among America's schoolchildren has consistently increased throughout the Clinton Administration:

- For 8th graders, the proportion using *any illicit drug* in the prior 12 months has increased 56 percent since President Clinton's first year in office, and since 1993 it has increased 52 percent among 10th graders and 30 percent among 12th graders.
- *Marijuana use* accounted for much of the overall increase in illicit drug use, continuing its strong resurgence. All measures of marijuana use showed an increase at all three grade levels monitored in 1996. Among 8th graders, use in the prior 12 months has increased 99 percent since 1993, President Clinton's first year in office. Among 10th graders, annual prevalence has increased 75 percent -- and a full 121 percent increase from the record low in President Bush's last term in 1992. Among 12th graders it increased 38 percent since 1993.

- Of particular concern, according to the survey, is the continuing rise in ***daily marijuana use***. Nearly one in every twenty of today's high school seniors is a current daily marijuana user, and one in every thirty 10th graders uses daily. While only 1.5 percent of 8th graders use marijuana daily, that still represents a near doubling of the rate in 1996 alone.
- The annual prevalence of ***LSD*** rose in all three grade levels in 1996. In short, since President Clinton assumed office, annual LSD use has increased 52 percent, 64 percent, and 29 percent among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders respectively. ***Hallucinogens other than LSD***, taken as a class, continued gradual increases in 1996 at all three grade levels.
- The use of ***cocaine in any form*** continued a gradual upward climb. ***Crack cocaine*** also continued a gradual upward climb among 8th and 10th graders. In short, since President Clinton assumed office, annual cocaine use is up 77 percent, 100 percent, and 49 percent among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders respectively.
- The longer-term gradual rise in the use of ***amphetamine stimulants*** also continued at the 8th and 10th grade levels.
- Since 1993, annual ***heroin usage*** has increased by 129 percent, 71 percent, and 100 percent for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders respectively. That is, for 8th and 12th graders, use of heroin has at least doubled since Clinton first took office.

## Now is NOT the Time to Take a Back Seat

According to some experts, the age of first use is a critical indicator of the seriousness of the drug problem because early risk-taking behavior statistically correlates to riskier behavior later. For example, the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University estimates that a young person who uses marijuana is 79 times more likely to go on to try cocaine than one who hasn't used marijuana.

The most current survey on drug use -- the so called **PRIDE survey** -- shows a continuing and alarming increase in drug abuse by young kids. While the increase in drug use among older students has remained flat this year, illegal drug use among 11 to 14 year-olds has continued on a dangerous upward path. According to the President of PRIDE, "Senior high drug use may have stalled, but it is stalled at the highest levels PRIDE has measured in ten years. Until we see sharp declines in use at all grade levels, there will be no reason to rejoice." With respect to younger students, the survey found that:

- A full 11 percent of junior high students (grades 6-8) are monthly illicit drug users.

- Junior high students reported significant increases in monthly use of marijuana, cocaine, uppers, downers, hallucinogens and heroin, specifically:
  - Annual marijuana use increased 153 percent since Mr. Clinton's first year in office
  - Cocaine use increased 88 percent since Mr. Clinton's first year in office
  - Hallucinogen use increased by 67 percent since Mr. Clinton's first year in office.

## **Clinton's Mistaken Priorities: Failed Enforcement of Drug Laws**

A recent analysis by Robert E. Peterson, former drug czar for the state of Michigan, revealed:

- In 1994, a person was more likely to receive a prison sentence for federal gambling, regulatory, motor carrier, immigration or perjury offense than for possessing crack, heroin, or other dangerous drugs under the federal system.
- The time served for drug possession is less than half that of federal regulatory and tax offenses, less than a third that of mailing obscene materials, and equivalent to migratory bird offense sentences.
- In 1995, a federal trafficker could expect seven months less on average drug sentences than in 1992.
- Possession of 128 pounds of cocaine, 128 pounds of marijuana, 3 pounds of heroin and/or 1.5 pounds of crack earned only eight months in prison. Six in ten of these federal criminals served no time at all in 1992.
- The average federal sentence imposed for drug offenders increased by 37 percent from 1986-1991, but has declined 7 percent from 1991-1995.

## **Returning to a Serious Strategy**

In 1993 the Clinton Administration promised to "reinvent our drug control programs" and "move beyond ideological debates." What that amounted to was de-emphasizing law enforcement and interdiction and expecting dividends from "treatment on demand." Two years later, a congressional leadership task force developed the principles for a coherent, national counter-drug policy and a five-point strategy for future action. The task force called for:

- Sound interdiction strategy
- Serious international commitment to the full range of counter-narcotic activities
- Effective enforcement of the nation's drug laws
- United full-front commitment towards prevention and education
- Accountable and effective treatment with a commitment to learn from our nation's religious institutions.

Illegal drug use endangers our children and our economy and disproportionately harms the poor, yet President Clinton has accumulated a record of callous apathy. America cannot afford a "sound bite" war on drugs. Only a serious commitment to enforcement and interdiction efforts will produce results.

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